

BIDEN ENERGY POLICIES ARE THE SOURCE OF INFLATION

(Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the Biden administration's self-made energy crisis.

Since taking office, I have been vocal about my commitment to alternative forms of energy that bring revenue and flexibility to Iowa and allow Iowa to be a major energy exporter.

However, the Biden administration's policies have relied on foreign nations instead of prioritizing American energy independence.

Iowans have felt the effect of President Biden's policies. Grocery and energy prices continue to soar with inflation rates at historic highs. So while the temperatures drop into the teens, some are forced to choose between turning on their heat and buying groceries.

According to the National Energy Assistance Directors Association, diesel prices could top \$6 per gallon this winter, but Iowa could fill the gap with biodiesel. Struggling families simply cannot afford President Biden's energy policies.

I want to reiterate my calls to President Biden to unleash domestic energy and look towards Iowa as a framework for an any-of-the-above approach to lower energy costs for Americans.

I also want to wish a very happy birthday to Andy Swanson.

IN MEMORY OF DONALD MCEACHIN

(Mr. GRIJALVA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in shock and feeling an immense loss for the Member that will not be with us, Donald McEachin, the gentleman from Virginia, a dear friend.

The members of the Committee on Natural Resources extend to his family, his wife Colette, his children and his grandchildren, his loved ones, and his loyal and capable staff, our condolences, our sympathies, and our comfort.

This imposing man, Donald McEachin, was more than that. His strength came from his heart, his faith, his empathy, and his compassion for other people.

On this journey, I have had the privilege and pleasure to work with him for over 3 years to develop legislation that would assure every American had clean air, clean water, and a clean environment. That piece of legislation is historic, and it is the creation of great work on the part of Donald McEachin.

It is his legacy that I hope we address, but it is also his character and his strength, as he guided me and other Members through a process that is

sometimes difficult, sometimes contentious, but a process that at the end of the day has produced something that will be part of the legacy of a man that served his community, served his country, served his family, and gave honor to all of us. This is a deep loss, an immense loss, and one that I share with everyone.

AMERICANS ARE EXPERIENCING INFLATION AT A 40-YEAR HIGH

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week, families across America sat down to enjoy Thanksgiving meals. Unfortunately, this week, as a result of irresponsible policies of Biden and Democrats, families are paying massive costs.

Americans are experiencing inflation at a 40-year high with families in South Carolina paying nearly 15 percent more for goods and services in the last year.

Average national costs have increased. Turkey is up 21 percent. Pie crusts and whipping cream are up 26 percent. Dinner rolls are up 22 percent. Milk is up 16 percent.

According to the recent Morning Consult poll, 41 percent of Thanksgiving shoppers were planning to cut side dishes to save money.

Our country is in a crisis, and Americans need relief, which is why voters elected a House Republican majority. Republicans will fight inflation with fiscal sanity.

In conclusion, God bless our troops who successfully protected America for 20 years, as the global war on terrorism continues moving from the Afghanistan safe haven to America.

RECOGNIZING JESSE PORRAS

(Mr. PFLUGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a servant leader in our community, Odessa native, Mr. Jesse Porras, a Marine veteran.

Mr. Porras has been cooking and serving a Thanksgiving meal to hundreds of Odessans in need every year since 2013 when he first felt called to provide a warm and comforting meal to anyone in need or struggling with homelessness in our community. Since then, it has grown into a community feast, with local businesses and others partnering with Jesse. Over the past 9 years, Mr. Porras' Thanksgiving meal has fed thousands and lifted the spirits of the entire community.

Jesse Porras is an inspiration to all of us. Not only was he willing to put his life on the line through his service to our country as a marine, but he continues that service through his generosity and philanthropic spirit today. This is something that we can all emu-

late, especially as we are approaching the holiday season.

I thank Mr. Porras personally for giving so much of his time, talent, and goodwill to share the blessings of Thanksgiving, which, in my opinion, should be celebrated every day. But on that particular day, he does a great job in Odessa. It is with heartfelt thanks that Texas' 11th Congressional District thanks him.

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MOURNING THE TRAGEDY AT UVA AND HONORING THE BRAVERY OF MIKE HOLLINS

(Mr. GOOD of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the senseless and tragic loss of life at the University of Virginia on November 13, but I also rise to recognize and honor the bravery displayed by Mike Hollins during the recent shooting at the University of Virginia.

After getting off the bus and directing two students to run to safety, Mike Hollins, a running back on the Cavaliers football team, turned around and attempted to reboard the bus to help his teammates and others still trapped with the gunman.

Mike's bravery was met with evil, however, as he was shot while trying to protect those still in harm's way. Thankfully, Mike has been released from the hospital. I pray he will continue to have a full and complete recovery.

My prayers are also with the families of D'Sean Perry, Lavel Davis, Jr., and Devin Chandler, who are deeply hurting from the loss of their loved ones, along with the entire University of Virginia community.

We are always saddened in the face of tragedy, but bravery like Mike Hollins showed gives us hope. May God continue to heal our land.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

DELIVERING OPTIMALLY URGENT LABOR ACCESS FOR VETERANS AFFAIRS ACT OF 2022

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2521) to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to furnish doula services to veterans, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.
The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2521

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Delivering Optimally Urgent Labor Access for Veterans Affairs Act of 2022” or the “DOULA for VA Act of 2022”.

SEC. 2. FEASIBILITY AND ADVISABILITY STUDY ON DOULA SUPPORT FOR VETERANS.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a study on the feasibility and advisability of furnishing doula services to covered veterans. Such study shall include an analysis of—

(1) measures taken by other Federal, State, and local entities to ensure the appropriate certification of doulas; and

(2) the extent to which such measures, or similar measures, may be adequate for purposes of such furnishment.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the findings of the study under subsection (a) that shall include a determination by the Secretary as to whether furnishing doula services to covered veterans is feasible and advisable.

(c) COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term “covered veteran” means a pregnant veteran or a formerly pregnant veteran (with respect to doula services to be furnished post-partum) who is enrolled in the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 2521, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2521, as amended, the DOULA for VA Act of 2022. This bill, authored and long championed by Congresswoman BRENDA LAWRENCE, would bring VA closer to providing the full scope of reproductive healthcare that our veterans and their newborns deserve. This bill would require VA conduct a feasibility and advisability study to determine whether to provide pregnant veterans access to doula support services.

The United States has a maternal mortality crisis, and our veterans are not protected from it. In fact, they are disproportionately more likely to experience severe maternal mental health outcomes than their civilian counterparts.

There is a growing body of research that shows that doula care is an effective tool in mitigating pre and postpartum mental health crises and can be a factor in reducing childbirth complications. The VA must investigate the ability to provide such holistic and effective care.

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly support this bill. I encourage all my colleagues to join me in supporting Mrs. LAWRENCE’s critical and commonsense legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2521, the Delivering Optimally Urgent Labor Access for Veterans Affairs Act of 2022, or the DOULA for VA Act of 2022.

Women are now our fastest growing group within the veteran community. More than 2 million women veterans live in the U.S. today. Many of them are within childbearing age.

In the last few years, the use of maternal services within the VHA has increased by 44 percent. The DOULA for VA Act would require VA to conduct a study to provide doula services for pregnant veterans enrolled in the VA healthcare system.

Mr. Speaker, a doula is a trained companion who provides physical and emotional support to women before, during, and after childbirth. They also offer guidance and educational support for new mothers. However, doulas are not medically trained professionals, and there are no certifying or licensing standards for doulas, which is why it is imperative that doulas meet the minimum quality and safety standards set forth by the VA.

This bill will provide VA and Congress with valuable insight into the trade, and I ask all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2521.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE), the author of H.R. 2521 and my good friend, who serves on the Appropriations Committee and the Oversight and Reform Committee.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his dedication and the efforts of his entire team in bringing this bill to the floor. I also thank the ranking member for his support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the DOULA for VA Act.

Maternal mortality in the United States is a public health crisis. While maternal mortality rates have declined globally over the past three decades, the United States’ maternal mortality rates have climbed.

As we work to address this serious public health issue, we have a responsibility to make sure that our pregnant veterans are included in the conversation. This is because veterans who have experienced pregnancy disproportion-

ately experience mental health afflictions such as post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety.

Studies have found that pregnant veterans were twice as likely to have a diagnosis of depression, anxiety, and stress disorder, and more than those who had not experienced a pregnancy.

We must provide veterans who have served our country optimal maternal and mental health care that takes into consideration their veteran-specific experiences.

Doulas have a proven positive effect on the health outcome of the mother and child. As the use of doula services continue to grow, we must look at ways to expand maternal health services for our women in the VA.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues for supporting this effort, the House leadership and their hard-working staff, and the amazing committee staff for working to advance this bill to the floor. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I encourage all my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I again ask my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 2521, as amended. With a heavy heart, I take this moment to pay tribute to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE). She has joined us on Veterans Affairs’ codels and done factfinding on behalf of the committee for the betterment of our veterans. I thank her for that, and I wish her the best of the new opportunities that she will encounter after she leaves this body.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2521, DOULA for VA Act of 2021—to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to furnish doula services to veterans.

Doulas provide emotional and physical support to pregnant people during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum. A doula will assist during birth by providing a positive and safe birthing experience.

Studies show that when doulas are present in the birthing process labors are shorter, it is less likely that a C-section will be needed, there are less requests for pain medication, and there is a more positive childbirth experience.

In 2013, the Journal of Perinatal Education conducted a study which found that expectant mothers matched with a doula had better birth outcomes than did mothers who gave birth without involvement of a doula.

Doulas work to develop birthing plans, help the parent understand labor and delivery procedures, communicate preferences to the medical staff, and teach relaxation and breathing skills, along with many other non-clinical tasks that improve the birthing experience.

Currently, Veterans Affairs benefits do not cover doulas.

Improving the childbirth experience should be a priority for us all. Veterans and their family members deserve to have positive birthing experiences, just as all Americans do.

Maternal mortality is an issue that continues to plague the United States health care system. In 2020, 861 women died of maternal causes in the United States. In the U.S., two-thirds of those pregnancy-related deaths are preventable and for every pregnancy-related death, there are 70 pregnancy-related near-death experiences. It's extremely important that we remove barriers in health care that may be contributing to these deaths.

Maternal mortality is caused by several issues such as cardiovascular problems, high blood pressure, blood clots, and complications of labor and delivery.

One step to removing health care barriers is to provide more services such as doulas who can advocate for the parent and provide positive birthing experiences.

From 2010 through 2015, the use of maternity services from the Veterans Health Administration increased by 44 percent.

If doula services are improving care for the general public, then veterans should be provided with the opportunity to utilize doula services as well.

A study in 2010 found that veterans returning from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom who experienced pregnancy were twice as likely to have a diagnosis of depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia as compared to those who had not experienced a pregnancy.

H.R. 2521, Doula for VA Act of 2021 is important because we should be working to improve the lives of women and children in the United States. This bill directly impacts the health of veterans and their families.

I know that this bill is important to my constituents in Houston. Over 282,000 Veterans live in the Houston area, and almost 25,000 Veterans in Houston are women. Improving the birthing experience for these women is a top priority to me.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this critical bill that will direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to furnish doula services to veterans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2521, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COMMITMENT TO VETERAN SUPPORT AND OUTREACH ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4601) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants to States to improve outreach to veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4601

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act".

SEC. 2. AUTHORITY FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO AWARD GRANTS TO STATES AND INDIAN TRIBES TO IMPROVE OUTREACH TO VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 63 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating sections 6307 and 6308 and sections 6308 and 6309, respectively; and

(2) by inserting after section 6306 the following new section 6307:

"§ 6307. Grants to States and Indian Tribes to improve outreach to veterans

"(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to provide for assistance by the Secretary to States and Indian Tribes to carry out programs that—

"(1) improve outreach and assistance to veterans and the spouses, children, and parents of veterans, to ensure that such individuals are fully informed about any veterans and veterans-related benefits and programs (including veterans programs of a State or Indian Tribe) for which they may be eligible; and

"(2) facilitate opportunities for such individuals to receive competent, qualified services in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of veterans benefits claims.

"(b) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may award grants under this section to States and Indian Tribes—

"(1) to carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance outreach activities;

"(2) to increase the number of county or Tribal veterans service officers serving in the State or Indian Tribe by hiring new, additional such officers; or

"(3) to expand, carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance existing programs, activities, and services of the existing organization of the State or Indian Tribe that has been recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to section 5902, in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for veterans benefits through representatives who hold positions as county or Tribal veterans service officers.

"(c) APPLICATION.—(1) To be eligible for a grant under this section, a State or Indian Tribe shall submit to the Secretary an application therefor at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

"(2) Each application submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

"(A) A detailed plan for the use of the grant.

"(B) A description of the programs through which the State or Indian Tribe will meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (i).

"(C) A description of how the State or Indian Tribe will distribute grant amounts equitably among counties (or Tribal lands, as the case may be) with varying levels of urbanization.

"(D) A plan for how the grant will be used to meet the unique needs of American Indian or Alaska Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans, and veterans from other underserved communities.

"(d) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall seek to ensure that grants awarded under this section are equitably distributed among States and Indian Tribes with varying levels of urbanization.

"(e) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall prioritize awarding grants under this section that will serve the following areas:

"(1) Areas with a critical shortage of county or Tribal veterans service officers.

"(2) Areas with high rates of—

"(A) suicide among veterans; or

"(B) referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line.

"(f) USE OF COUNTY OR TRIBAL VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS.—A State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section to carry out an activity described in subsection (b)(1) may only carry out the activity through—

"(1) a county or Tribal veterans service officer of the State or Indian Tribe; or

"(2) if the State or Indian Tribe does not have a county or Tribal veterans service officer, or if the county or Tribal veterans service officers of the State or Indian Tribe cover only a portion of that State or Indian Tribe, an appropriate entity of a State, local, or Tribal government, as determined by the Secretary.

"(g) REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.—Any grant awarded under this section shall be used—

"(1) to expand existing programs, activities, and services;

"(2) to hire and maintain new, additional county or Tribal veterans service officers; or

"(3) for travel and transportation to facilitate carrying out paragraph (1) or (2).

"(h) OTHER PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES.—A grant under this section may be used to provide education and training, including on-the-job training, for State, county, local, and Tribal government employees who provide (or when trained will provide) veterans outreach services in order for those employees to obtain and maintain accreditation in accordance with procedures approved by the Secretary.

"(i) OUTCOME MEASURES.—(1) The Secretary shall develop and provide to each State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section written guidance on the following:

"(A) Outcome measures.

"(B) Policies of the Department.

"(2) In developing outcome measures under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the following goals:

"(A) Increasing the use of veterans and veterans-related benefits, particularly among vulnerable populations.

"(B) Increasing the number of county and Tribal veterans service officers recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under chapter 59 of this title.

"(j) TRACKING REQUIREMENTS.—(1) With respect to each grant awarded under this section, the Secretary shall track the use of veterans benefits among the population served by the grant, including the average period of time between the date on which a veteran or other eligible claimant applies for such a benefit and the date on which the veteran or other eligible claimant receives the benefit, disaggregated by type of benefit.

"(2) Not less frequently than annually during the life of the grant program established under this section, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on—

"(A) the information tracked under paragraph (1);

"(B) how the grants awarded under this section serve the unique needs of American Indian or Alaska Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans, and veterans from other underserved communities; and

"(C) other information provided by States and Indian Tribes pursuant to the grant reporting requirements.

"(k) PERFORMANCE REVIEW.—(1) The Secretary shall—

"(A) review the performance of each State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section; and

"(B) make information regarding such performance publicly available.

"(l) REMEDIATION PLAN.—(1) In the case of a State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant